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Title: 'The labyrinth towards citizenship: Contradictions in the framing and categorizing of immigrants in immigration and integration policies'

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Accepted for publication in: *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*

To refer to or to cite this work, please use the citation to the published version:

Waerniers, R., & Hustinx, L. (forthcoming). The labyrinth towards citizenship: Contradictions in the framing and categorizing of immigrants in immigration and integration policies.

Accepted for publication in *Identities*

The labyrinth towards citizenship: Contradictions in the framing and categorizing of immigrants in immigration and integration policies

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Abstract

Restrictive policies in Europe are accompanied by exclusionary discourses concerning national citizenship of immigrants, depicting them dichotomously as either ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’. In our analysis of both immigration and integration policies in Belgium, we focus on how these political discourses interact to differentiate between categories of immigrants who are in/excluded to some degree in a more complex way than the dichotomy suggests. We conduct framing and category analysis of migration and integration policies to reveal a discursive field with four central frames producing seven categorizations of immigrants with different degrees of deservingness. Instead of a linear path, migrants are trapped in a labyrinth towards citizenship. We uncover four main contradictions in the policy discourse, leading to the conclusion that an ever probationary citizenship status is the highest obtainable goal for certain immigrants. Lastly, we discuss the implications of this labyrinth for the socioeconomic position of immigrants.

Keywords: Policy analysis, immigration, integration, citizenship, human rights, categories

Introduction

As a reaction to the increasing number of immigrants trying to reach Europe, the EU and its member states have adopted more restrictive asylum and immigration policies in an attempt to limit the current immigration inflow (Swerts 2014; Darling 2014; Bloch and Schuster 2002; Rosenberger and König 2012). These restrictive policies are accompanied by exclusionary political discourses focusing on national citizenship (Bosniak 2008; Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010; Schinkel 2010; Strang and Ager 2010). In line with the (post-)Foucauldian governmentality perspective, we view citizenship as an instrument of inclusion and exclusion through which state authorities manage the population (Faulks 2000; Schinkel 2010; Ong 2003; Longman, De Graeve, and Brouckaert 2013; Isin and Nyers 2014;

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Castles and Davidson 2000). Accordingly, relevant policies use different discursive categorizations of citizens and immigrants (Mügge and van der Haar 2016) to 'produce objects of problematizations' and legitimize exclusions (Schrover and Schinkel 2013).

Scholarly analysis of Western immigration policy discourses demonstrates that immigrants are dichotomously presented as either 'undeserving' or 'deserving' of (citizenship) rights (Bloch and Schuster 2002). Undeserving immigrants are portrayed as a threat to national security, the welfare state and national identity (Bloch and Schuster 2002; Sasse 2005; Huysmans and Squire 2009). Deserving refugees are generally represented as victims of severe conditions in their home countries or of human trafficking (Sales 2002; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012; Yoo 2008; Watters 2007; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, and Kofman 2005).

A growing number of scholars have nevertheless argued that in practice and in law, the exclusion of immigrants from citizenship does not materialize as a strict dichotomy between citizens and non-citizens, but rather reflects a continuum between full exclusion and full inclusion (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012; Nash 2009; Castles 2005; Nyers 2011; Swerts 2014; Castles and Davidson 2000; Sassen 2002; Ong 2006). A 'proliferation of status groups' (Nash, 2009) occurs through the disarticulation of the different components (rights, entitlements, participation and belonging) of citizenship (Ong 2006; Swerts 2014; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012) and the complex intertwinement of national citizenship rights and supranational human rights (Nash 2009; See also Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012). Nash (2009), for example, distinguishes five groups and based on the substantive and formal rights they hold presents a hierarchy from the 'super citizen' enjoying full citizenship to the 'marginal citizen', the 'quasi-citizen', the 'sub-citizen' and the 'un-citizen'. The latter having no legal status and very limited rights. However, scholars have not studied how the complexity of statuses, as demonstrated in practice and law, is reflected in the political discourse. Our study looks beyond the discursive dichotomy, and investigates empirically the categories and frames in policy discourses.

Although previous research has treated immigration and integration policies as distinct fields, we argue that a combined analysis of the two policy domains is warranted in order to grasp the full complexity of immigration policy. Schinkel (2010) observes a 'moralization of citizenship' within integration policies, implying a stronger focus on moral (extra-judicial) aspects of citizenship at the expense of its formal aspects (judicial status and rights). Other authors point to the erosion of social citizenship by narrowing it down to a 'market citizenship', in which paid work is considered central for social inclusion and the perception of deservingness (Fuller, Kershaw, and Pulkingham 2008). In a comparative study of civic integration policies Goodman (2010, 769) concluded that 'citizenship for

newcomers is now, more than ever, a contract relationship' by putting in to place obligatory integration requirements.

By scrutinizing the entanglements between immigration and integration policies, we map the wider discursive policy field and reflect on its consequences for the socioeconomic position of immigrants. We aim to identify (1) which categories of immigrants are used within immigration and integration policies, and through which frames these are legitimized and (2) how the entanglement of these categories and frames produce certain barriers or contradictions, reflecting different forms of in- and exclusions. More specific, we focus on the Belgian immigration and integration policies between 2009 and 2015. Belgium is an interesting case, as it is one of the few European countries where asylum requests decreased between 2011 and 2014 (Pelfrene 2014). Governmental agencies have attributed this decline to the increasingly restrictive policies in that period.

Empirical research shows that the way in which immigrants and their citizenship are discursively constructed in policies plays an important role in how these policies are received and acted upon, both by the host community and the immigrants themselves (da Lomba 2010; Stewart and Mulvey 2014). More precisely, Stewart and Mulvey (2014) find that as national governments implement increasingly restrictive policies, they also install emotional and psychological obstacles to long-term integration. The difficulties that immigrants encounter in the process of acquiring national citizenship create feelings of uncertainty and fear that influence their decision-making processes, for instance in their search for a job. Indeed, a key focus in the present-day debate is the socioeconomic position of immigrants. This study aims to contribute to the debates about the socioeconomic incorporation of immigrants into the host society by studying political discourses on their citizenship. We argue that to fully understand the complexity and challenges of socioeconomic incorporation, it is necessary to contextualize this question in the broader discursive field of immigration and integration policies. Through the combined analysis of both policy discourses, our analysis reveals that immigrants are not offered a linear route towards citizenship but are trapped in a labyrinth full of turns and barriers as exemplified by the discursive categorizations and contradictions they are confronted with. Based on our analysis, we claim that it might become a labyrinth without an end as the citizenship status of people of colour is persistently problematized.

Material and methods

In the federal state of Belgium, the federal government is responsible for immigration policy across the entire territory, whereas integration policy is an autonomous matter for the three 'community governments' (i.e., Flemish, Walloon and German). We focus on the integration policy of the Flemish

government, which has authority over the Northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Our data thus comprises the relevant sections of the governmental agreements and the official policy statements regarding, first, immigration and asylum from the Federal Belgian government between 2011 and 2015, and second, integration from the Flemish government between 2009 and 2015 (eleven documents in total, see Table 1).

TABLE 1 here

In our analysis, we use a social constructionist approach, building on Foucault's claim of a strong link between power and knowledge. Discourse is a form of social action whereby powerful actors can influence and constitute subjects (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). One way in which policymakers create an influential discourse in policy documents is through the use of discursive strategies such as 'framing' and 'categorization' (Rein and Schon 1977; van Hulst and Yanow 2016). Frames help policymakers in the process of defining a problem by highlighting some features of a situation while neglecting others and binding the highlighted aspects together in a coherent pattern. Categorization as another sense-making device is often part of this broader framing. Categories ascribe an essential identity to subjects while ignoring certain other elements. As this categorization emphasizes one or more characteristics, it can have very powerful effects. This framing and categorization in policy discourse is highly political, and brings about one way of viewing a situation and solving the problem, guiding future action. As such we conduct frame analysis and category analysis as tools of discourse analysis.

The documents were analysed through different yet overlapping phases, using Nvivo software. First, we conducted exploratory, open coding of all documents to identify the main themes (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Second, these main themes and related text fragments were analysed in-depth by asking the following questions: What is this about and what frame is created? Who is this about? What are the underlying assumptions? In this way we identified the four frames and seven categories as part of these frames that were used in the documents and their underlying assumptions. Subsequently, interrelations between these categories and frames were examined and visualised in a scheme. Finally, by mapping and analysing these interrelations and investigating the underlying assumptions of the different frames and categories we reveal four contradictions between these frames and categories.

Results

This first section relates to the first research question as we describe the frames and categories within migration and integration policies. Interestingly, our analysis shows that citizenship and

human rights arguments are used in different ways resulting in a complex discursive field. We start by describing frame 1 and 2, which are omnipresent in the immigration policies but are less referred to in the integration policies. Afterwards we discuss frame 3 and 4, which appear mainly in the integration policies and to a lesser, but still notable, extent in the immigration policies. For each of the frames we present and explain the categories of immigrants that are used within these frames. Frames might overlap as for example in the case of category (d) which is part of both frame 2 and 3.

Frame 1: Immigration policy as crisis management

Immigration has been a central topic in Belgian politics for several years, due to the shortage of sheltered accommodation for asylum seekers that started in 2008 and lasted until 2012. This shortage resulted from a legislative amendment in 2007 substituting financial support for asylum seekers by material support (shelter and food). However, shelter places were not adapted accordingly. In addition, asylum requests increased during this period. The situation was very precarious, especially during harsh winter conditions, which stirred intense public debate with civil society organisations pointing to the responsibility of the Belgian government for the violation of human rights and international agreements. Amidst this situation, at the end of 2011, a new federal government began its term of office and the policy documents regarding immigration and asylum during that period began with describing immigration as in severe 'crisis': 'The state of the shelter network could be called dramatic at the end of 2011. The inflow of asylum seekers is structurally higher than the outflow' (Immigration 2012). This crisis frame, focusing on the problem of the in- and outflow of immigrants in the shelter network and how to manage this, has been dominant in immigration policies ever since.

The framing of the situation as a 'crisis' implies very clear solutions, which are presented as the only possible things to do. This is accomplished by stating that measures are 'necessary', thereby making immigration policies appear as a form of crisis management. The concrete measures suggested can be summarized in four main points. First, the inflow of asylum seekers should be reduced by taking restrictive measures that discourage possible immigrants to come to Belgium. Second, the outflow should be increased by a strong return policy. Third, the capacity for shelter should be adjusted and fourth fraud and abuse by immigrants should be tackled. Alternative ways of approaching and dealing with immigration are neglected. This framing reduces the complexity of the immigration question to a crisis of migration flow management. Other aspects of the situation are overlooked, for example that the lack of shelter places arose from a specific institutional crisis and had severe humanitarian consequences.

In the years after, the 'crisis' is restrained: all asylum seekers were given shelter. Moreover, what is very striking is that the number of asylum requests in Belgium decreased in 2012 and 2013, whereas they increased in all other Western European countries. In the policy documents of the following years, the crisis frame is re-used and it is stated that great improvements to manage 'the crisis' have been made: '2012 was a turning point in Belgian policy regarding asylum, migration and shelter. For the first time since 2008, there is a decrease in the number of asylum requests in Belgium' (Immigration 2012). Strikingly the new government at the end of 2014 also continued to embed its policies in the crisis frame by stating that 'a new crisis needed to be avoided'. Within this crisis frame, the cause of the shortage in shelter accommodation is externalised by labelling immigrants as a threat. This is done through the use of two different categories: the profiteer immigrant and the criminal immigrant. Hence they are undeserving of asylum and residency and are named 'illegals'.

(a) The profiteer immigrant

Immigrants are categorized as profiteers and fraudsters, which is supported by two lines of argument. First, they are called profiteers because they 'misuse' the human right to asylum. Immigrants who apply for asylum although their situation does not actually correspond to the UN Refugee Convention definition of 'a refugee' are labelled negatively as 'economic migrants'. Building on a narrow and strictly legal definition of a refugee, a specific, exclusionary, human rights argument is used here. Second, it is implicitly supposed that immigrants will try to take advantage of the benefits of the welfare state. For every right or measure explained in the policy document, it is stated that they will prevent and combat abuse by profiteer immigrants. This categorization is not only underpinned by a human rights argument, but also by a moral citizenship argument, whereby moral aspects of citizenship that immigrants should achieve are emphasized (Schinkel 2010). As profiteers, they do not meet the requirements of what a 'good citizen' should be. Immigrants are seen as a threat to the social security and welfare system:

To tackle the abuses of our valuable social security system, the bond with the Department of Social Issues will be strengthened. Accordingly, social support should end up with those who really need it and have the right to it, and not with those who, undeservedly, try to lay claim to it. (Immigration 2014)

What is silenced here is that immigrants may equally contribute economically to the society when they have access to the labour market. 'Economic migrant' is exclusively framed in a negative way as a cost to society.

(b) The criminal immigrant

This second categorization of immigrants in this frame is also used by both legislatures, but is most prevalent in the discourse of the Michel-government. Immigrants are called possible 'criminals' and 'delinquents': 'A priority for this government is to guarantee the protection of public order and national security and to ensure that criminals and delinquents without legal residency do not deserve consideration for a residence permit' (Immigration 2014). Asylum and immigration is framed as a concern regarding security and again a moral citizenship argument is used, since 'criminal immigrants' do not meet the requirements of a 'good citizen' and accordingly do not deserve formal citizenship.

Frame 2: Duties to international agreements

In addition to this crisis management-frame, a second – although less central – frame is interwoven into the immigration policy documents. The main point is quite simple: it is stressed that Belgium has duties and obligations in line with European and international agreements, and because of this the state has to grant protection and human rights to a selective group of immigrants. Belgian migration policies are framed as totally dependent on international agreements concerning human rights and asylum. Following from this, a specific human rights argument for refugees is employed as a justification to include solely those ('deserving') immigrants who are categorized as victim immigrants and aspiring citizen immigrants.

(c) The victim immigrant

The term 'vulnerable' is frequently used throughout the documents. Immigrants are depicted as victims of the severe situation in their home country and of human trafficking, and consequently considered in need of protection and guidance from the state. These victim immigrants are labelled as 'recognized refugees' if there is a positive response to their asylum request, and are permitted to reside in Belgium. Attention is paid to the assumed special needs of particular groups: 'Individual shelter is reserved for these vulnerable groups (persons with a physical disability, pregnant women, single parents, unaccompanied minor refugees)' (Immigration 2014).

(d) The aspiring citizen immigrant

The second category in this frame is that of vulnerable immigrants who are as possible future citizens, having their rights and duties. This category mostly refers to asylum seekers who are or will be recognized. Moreover, a couple of times reference is made to the importance of 'the autonomy' of asylum seekers, because this can improve (economic) integration when a positive response to the asylum request is given, or can encourage voluntary return if there is a negative response.

Also here, moral aspects of citizenship (Schinkel 2010) are mentioned as a prerequisite for attaining the legal status of citizenship in the future:

Acquaintance with the nationality will be reformed ... uninterrupted residence and integration can lead to obtaining nationality and not the other way around. The reform will make the law more migration-neutral and introduce requirements regarding knowledge of the language and integration of the candidates. Economic participation will be an element of the appreciation of integration. (Immigration 2014)

This extract illustrates the importance that is given to economic participation as an element of integration. As we will explain further, this specific argument – whereby moral citizenship is a prerequisite to attaining formal citizenship – is omnipresent in the integration policies and central in Frame 3. This category thus not only corresponds to Frame 2, but also to Frame 3.

Frame 3: The earning of moral citizenship through socioeconomic participation and cultural assimilation

This frame is central in the integration policy documents. A clear problem is put forward by focusing on ‘a gap’ in participation between ‘people of foreign origin’ and ‘native Belgians’ (as they are named in the documents), illustrated by participation rates in different areas of society, such as education, the labour market and housing. Most attention is paid to the difference in labour-market participation. This participation gap is called ‘the ethnic gap’ in the policy documents of the period 2014–2019: ‘Although diversity is a fact, persons of a foreign origin still do not participate fully and proportionally in our society. There is a big ethnic gap’ (Integration 2014). This problematizes immigrants as dependent, and socially and particularly economically not well integrated. Moral citizenship through economic achievement is one of the conditions to attain formal citizenship in Belgium and is accordingly used to exclude certain immigrants.

Although the problem of integration is stated mostly in economic terms, sociocultural aspects are more strongly emphasized in descriptions of the desired goals and means. Two main goals are formulated: first, fostering social cohesion, and second, achieving active and shared citizenship for everyone. Since ethnic and cultural diversity is claimed to challenge social cohesion in society, the aim is to create social cohesion within ‘a frame of common values and norms’, as especially stressed in the documents of the Peeters-government. At several places, the policies not only point at the importance of participating in public culture, but also of adjusting the behaviour of immigrants to ‘our Western culture’ as a means to create social cohesion and active citizenship. This is illustrated by the following fragment: ‘A large majority of the population believes that foreigners who settle here have to adjust themselves to the culture and the customs of our country’ (Integration 2009). Here,

one can see how adaptation to 'our culture' comes to the fore as a central aspect of moral citizenship that has to be acquired by immigrants. In addition, much attention is paid to learning the Dutch language as a condition for integrating into society, a means to bridge the ethnic gap and to foster social cohesion. No reference is made to the value of the mother tongue of the immigrants or to which language should be used while they are still learning Dutch. This is what scholars term the 'cultural assimilation' aspect of current integration policies (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010). However, in the documents it is claimed explicitly that assimilation is not the goal that is strived for and it is stated that people should retain their 'uniqueness'. This may be considered a discursive strategy to circumvent the negative connotation of assimilation in European countries.

The second main goal put forward in the documents is that of promoting and attaining 'active and shared citizenship' for all, but the particular group targeted is the problematized group of immigrants. This goal is closely linked to the participation gap and accordingly the word 'active' stresses a certain type of citizenship in which (economic) participation is key. This relates to the findings of Warburton and Smith (2003, 774) that 'new values identify citizenship less with membership of a social community and more with active participation in that community'. Moreover, we also find that a strong correlation is suggested between paid work and moral citizenship (Fuller, Kershaw, and Pulkington 2008; Warburton and Smith 2003; Turner 2001). This is formulated explicitly as follows: 'The most important factor determining if a population category participates structurally is the employment rate' (Integration 2014). 'Full' is a second adjective often linked to citizenship in the documents. Someone who is not economically participating is not perceived as 'full citizen'. In contrast with the two previous frames, little attention is given to formal aspects of citizenship, such as juridical status and the rights of a citizen (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010).

This framing of citizenship as active participation assumes implicit that the responsibility for attaining integration and social cohesion in society largely rests with the immigrants themselves (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010; Mulvey 2010). In addition, the question why the Belgian governments are doing so poorly in terms of the participation of immigrants is not raised. This discourse frames integration as an individual duty that has to be fulfilled in order to 'deserve' citizenship rights, and less as something structural. Moreover, it seems to suppose that (a large proportion of) immigrants are not willing to integrate, as this excerpt illustrates: 'Nor is it permitted that people hide behind a group identity in order to avoid certain responsibilities. Both government and services as well as (new) Flemish people have to take their responsibility' (Integration 2009). However, this quote shows that responsibility is also placed on the government and the community as a whole. It is notable that the responsibility of the government is made explicit in the policy documents and accordingly is not

taken for granted. The formulated task of the government is to improve and ensure accessibility to services and institutions in order to enhance the participation of ethnic minorities in society. This differs slightly from the conclusions of Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010), who state that a neoliberal form of citizenship is used in Dutch integration policies, where the full responsibility is imposed on the individuals and the community. Still, also in this frame little attention is paid to the role of the government in the reduction of discrimination. It is referred to as a shared responsibility and no concrete measures are mentioned. In sum, this frame problematizes immigrants' economic participation in society and focuses on cultural differences, which are supposed to be remedied through the efforts at integration made by immigrants in order to attain 'full citizenship' and social cohesion. Within this frame two different categories of immigrants are used: the probationary and the virtual citizen immigrant.

(e) The probationary citizen immigrant

The integration policy documents are most concerned with this first category of newly arrived migrants who are subject to a compulsory civic integration programme. This programme occupies a central position as the chief instrument for turning immigrants into active citizens, integrated in Flemish society. The programme contains a civic orientation course, Dutch classes, career orientation and individual counselling. Whereas the career orientation and individual counselling confirm the focus on the economic integration of immigrants, the civic orientation course has the goal of making them acquainted with Flemish and Belgian society and culture. As such, for these immigrants moral citizenship is conditional for formal citizenship. We can call this 'probationary citizenship', as immigrants are in a sort of 'trial period' in which they have to prove that they have 'earned' the legal status of citizen (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas 2012). This 'earned citizenship' is no longer a status immigrants automatically obtain as a consequence of residing in a country, but as a merit gained for good behaviour (Van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel 2011).

(f) The virtual citizen immigrant

The second category in this frame refers to people of colour, often born in Belgium and descendants of immigrants, who may or may not be naturalized. These people are formal Belgian citizens, but are not yet seen as 'full' citizens. When reference is made to the 'ethnic gap', a comparison is made between people of 'foreign origin' and those of 'Belgian origin'. The virtual citizen is defined as part of the problem group consisting of people of 'foreign origin'. They are problematized because of their low rates of (economic) participation. In scientific literature this phenomenon is called 'virtualization of citizenship', whereby formal citizenship is just a starting point and 'real' citizenship is only possible through gaining moral citizenship (Schinkel and Van Houdt 2010). This is the reverse line of argument of probationary citizenship.

Frame 4: Only human rights and denial of moral citizenship

This frame is peripheral in the integration policy documents and can be subsumed under the one category which is part of it.

(g) The unauthorized immigrant

Although a large but unknown group in Belgian society (Deville 2008), this category is only referred to a few times in the document as ‘people without legal residence’. This category is closely linked to the profiteer (a) and criminal (b) immigrants within frame 1, often labelled as ‘illegal immigrants’ in the immigration policies. These unauthorized immigrants are not supposed to reside in the country because of their lack of legal residency documents, and although many of them participate in different domains of social life, these efforts towards integration and moral citizenship are denied by the state authorities. This ‘citizenship gap’ between the formal (legal status) and informal (citizenship practices) aspects of citizenship is characteristic of the position of undocumented immigrants (Swerts 2014; Sassen 2002). When young, undocumented and ‘well integrated’ migrants are expelled, their situation is regularly causing public debate, and this gap is highlighted. In this policy logic, the lack of formal citizenship is seen as more important than moral citizenship, and immigrants are guided towards voluntary return or alternatively forced to return. However, in the documents it is argued that the government should ensure basic (human) rights for these group of people such as the right to urgent medical help and education for minors. As such a human rights arguments is used here to include this group to a certain extent.

The labyrinth towards citizenship: entanglements and contradictions

Our second research question focused on how the frames and categories are entangled and what contradictions arise as a result. The dominant metaphor applied to immigration or integration policies has been that of a ‘road’ or ‘journey’ to citizenship. For example, Van Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel (2011) use this term to describe the integration policies in France, Great Britain and the Netherlands. However, our findings do not correspond to this metaphor as the relationships between the frames and categories presented in Figure 1 do not resemble a linear journey to citizenship. The frames and categories correspond to the different steps in the legal procedure that immigrants go through when arriving in Belgium, but in a much more complex and contradictory way than the concept of a single ‘road’ suggests. We therefore introduce the metaphor of ‘the labyrinth’ towards citizenship, referring to a complicated structure of paths, in which it is difficult to find the way and reach the exit. The labyrinth consists of multiple barriers and dead ends, as evidenced by a number of contradictions present in the discourses.

FIGURE 1 here

We found four remarkable contradictions in the policy discourses of which the last two also demonstrate the entanglements of the policy domains of migration and integration. First we found that a focus on human rights is not only used in an inclusive way but also serves to legitimize exclusionary measures, in a comparable way as citizenship might be an instrument of both in- and exclusion. On the one hand, frame 2 (i.e. duties to international agreements) uses a human rights argument in an inclusionary way by stressing the importance of human rights for granting protection to deserving asylum seekers. On the other hand in frame 1 (i.e. migration policy as crisis management) we found that the importance of human rights was emphasized as a way to exclude certain 'profiteer migrants' because they misuse the human right to asylum. In the policy discourse both arguments are often linked to each other as becomes clear in this quote:

The position that serves as a guideline is:

- A humane policy that offers international protection to those who need it.
- A correct policy that fights fraud and improper use of procedures.

(Immigration, 2012)

Throughout the documents, it is systematically argued that in order to be able to grant rights to some immigrants, others have to be excluded from those same rights, for example with regard to multiple asylum applications, family reunification, medical regularization, etc.: 'To offer effective protection to those who need it and have the right to it, consequently requires that we simultaneously focus on the prevention and elimination of misuse of the asylum procedure.' (Immigration, 2014) In this way, human rights arguments can be employed in a negative way to legitimize restrictive immigration measures and create additional barriers.

A second apparent contradiction concerns the problematisation of the category of 'the virtual citizen immigrant' within frame 3 by pointing to the 'ethnic gap'. The participatory deficit of these people of colour that are often descendants of immigrants is stressed but strikingly they are not the target group of the civic integration program. The policy documents do not contain any measures affecting this group. The only aim of problematizing this group seems to be to use them as a reference group, which legitimizes the problematisation of citizenship for new immigrants, and to virtualize the citizenship status of Belgian people of colour. This virtualization is also visible in the labels used to refer to this group such as 'new Flemish people', 'allochthons', 'old comers' etc. This contradiction is representing a dead end in the labyrinth.

The third contradiction can be discerned between the negative or powerless images of immigrants in some categories and the agency expected from immigrants in others. Migrants are portrayed as profiteers (a) and criminals (b) or very passively as victims (c). These categorizations act in such a way

that asylum seekers are depoliticized, that is, their political agency is completely denied (Darling 2014; Huysmans and Squire 2009). By contrast, the categories of the aspiring (d), the probationary (e) and the virtual (f) citizen immigrant focus on 'earning citizenship', hence on the agency of immigrants who need to strive to become good and active citizens (Van Houdt, Suvarierol, and Schinkel 2011; Jacobs and Rea 2007). Although the negative image of the migrant is most prevalent in migration policies and the agentic image of the migrant in integration policies, both images nevertheless occur across policies. For example, the categorization of immigrants as aspiring citizens is also present in immigration policies while it actually relates to civic integration instead of immigration policies. This contradiction thus shows the discursive entanglement between immigration and integration policies: immigration policies are not only concerned with controlling the geographical borders of the country, but also the symbolic borders of society (Schrover and Schinkel 2013).

The final contradiction further uncovers the intrinsic entanglement of both policy domains. It is striking that the category of the unauthorized immigrant (g), referring to people without legal residence permit, form a target group of the integration policy documents. Unauthorized immigrants are formally excluded from many different domains of society, and the ultimate aim of the Federal government is to expel them from the country. However, integration aims to include persons fully into society, and this contradicts with the meaning of the legal status of an unauthorized immigrant. This contradiction again creates tensions for the unauthorized migrants in this position: excluded from different spheres of social life and formal rights and included in some other more informal domains, while it is also stressed that they have to fulfil their duties. This relates to what Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas (2012) call 'ambiguous regimes of subordinate incorporation' and can be seen as a dead end in the labyrinth, not knowing if the unauthorized immigrant will ever be able to escape this liminal situation.

Discussion and conclusion

The metaphor of the labyrinth clarifies our findings that policy discourses do not simply use the distinction between the excluded/undeserving/non-citizen and the included/deserving/citizen to restrict immigration, but that a more complex configuration of framings, categorizations, and contradictions is involved. More specifically, we unravelled four contradictions resulting from this complex discursive field. First we found that human rights are an additional instrument of both in- and exclusion in the hands of the national governments. Second, the citizenship of Belgian people of colour is persistently virtualized and as such serves as a reference category for problematizing the yet-to-be citizenship of newly arriving immigrants. Third, the combined analysis of the policy domains of both immigration and integration reveals how immigrants have to be powerless and

agentic at the same time and have to be able to use both conditions strategically. And finally, unauthorized immigrants are also discursively positioned in a grey zone between formal exclusion and informal inclusion. The latter remaining unrecognized by the state. These discursive contradictions might become real barriers in the labyrinth towards citizenship.

The labyrinth towards citizenship in policy discourses is in line with Chauvin and Garcés-Mascreñas (2012, 253), who point to 'a continuum of probationary citizenship, which does not offer a linear route', and with Nash (2009, 1070), who argues that 'in practice, however, cosmopolitan law contributes rather to the complication of citizenship as a rights-bearing status'. We show in our study that the hierarchy presented by Nash is in fact more complex and ambiguous, and we reveal the policy discourses that enable the complexities in practice. In this paper, we illustrate that the complexity of immigration governance is also reflected in policy discourses by making use of the metaphor of the labyrinth.

In sum, we find that multiple routes in the labyrinth are possible. The labyrinth of immigration and integration policies starts with a split between different categories of newly arrived migrants, of which the path for the criminal and the profiteer turns out to be a dead end (i.e. return). However, immigrants first labelled as 'victims' can later turn into 'criminals' or 'profiteers'. If these immigrants do not subsequently return, they are labelled 'illegals', and within integration policy discourse they find themselves in a grey zone; not recognized as citizens but residing in the country and taking part in society. When immigrants are recognized as refugees, they arrive at the 'probationary citizenship' stage, which can ultimately lead to formal citizenship. Accordingly, they can theoretically reach the exit of the labyrinth. However, based on our analysis it is almost impossible to reach the status of 'full citizen'. When we observe how the citizenship of Belgian people of colour is virtualized and how the moral citizenship of undocumented immigrants is not recognized, we can also suppose that the citizenship of former immigrants will continuously be questioned. Only the white Belgians are seen as 'full citizens' because they are the only category possessing both formal and moral citizenship. The labyrinth might become one without an exit. From a governmentality perspective, the labyrinth legitimizes a wide range of policies and measures of inclusion and exclusion. It enables the state to regulate and manage the immigrant population through different barriers and dead ends.

For future research, it might be interesting to look at how these policy discourses evolve over time and influence discourses in the broader society. In addition, the questions of which and how discourses are used by people implementing the policies and interacting with refugees is pertinent. It would be highly relevant to explore how this labyrinth affects immigrants themselves, and how they react to the discourses that are often negative, demanding or ambiguous. Discourses are, indeed,

frameworks in which subjects can act and negotiate their political agency and belonging (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002). Mulvey (2010) states that the hostile political environment towards immigrants, created by the discourses in policies, raises integration problems for all immigrant groups. With regard to the working lives and labour market access of immigrants, the labyrinth creates ambiguous policies. On the one hand, the negative images might create a climate of fear in society leading to discrimination. Moreover, the image of immigrants as victims hinders a positive representation as potentially contributing citizen workers. At the same time, the barriers and negative discourses in the policies might create uncertainties and fear among the immigrants themselves, inhibiting their search for employment. On the other hand, paid work is seen as the key mechanism to achieve citizenship, and accordingly lack of employment is used as an instrument to exclude immigrants.

In sum, while labour migration was historically considered a positive societal dynamic (Mulvey 2010), labour market and work integration policies have now become entangled in a much more complex strategic field of immigration and integration policies. Indeed, our contextual analysis reveals that progressive human rights are turned into restrictive instruments to govern 'proper' motives for immigration, in which seeking refuge and migration for economic reasons are considered mutually exclusive. Further along the narrow corridors of the labyrinth, economic integration has become inextricably intertwined with cultural assimilation, and hence cannot be considered separately from the broader 'moralization of citizenship'. Accordingly, economic participation is given different strategic meanings depending on the position of the immigrant in the labyrinth. We believe that the metaphor of the labyrinth can provide guidance for future contextual analyses of (labour market) participation.

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Table 1. Analysed policy documents

		Document	Author of the document
Federal	Migration	Governmental agreement 2011	De Block (Di Rupo-government)
		Asylum and Migration 2011	
		Shelter 2011	
		Asylum and Migration 2012	
		Shelter 2012	
		Asylum and Migration 2013	
		Shelter 2013	
		Asylum and Migration 2014	Francken (Michel-government)
		Governmental agreement 2014	
Flemish	Integration	Civic integration and integration 2009–2011	Bourgeois (Peeters-government)
		Civic integration and integration 2014–2019	Homans (Bourgeois-government)

Figure 1. The labyrinth towards citizenship



